

## Background

The federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has made changes to the Federal

Hazard Communication Standard based on the International Global Harmonization System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). Washington State must adopt these changes, and rulemaking is underway at the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) to do so.

These changes are intended to improve comprehension of hazard information found on product labels. Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) will replace the current Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs). The ultimate goal of these changes is to more effectively prevent injuries and illnesses and save lives.

### Q: ***What is the Global Harmonization System (GHS)?***

A: GHS is an international system used to classify hazardous chemicals and standardize hazard information on product labels and safety data sheets, called SDSs.

### Q: ***What is a Safety Data Sheet?***

A: A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is replacing the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) as the primary source for detailed hazard information about chemical products. SDSs follow a standardized format while MSDSs are permitted to take on a variety of formats. The consistent format of SDSs is expected to increase familiarity so that employees can find information with quicker success, especially in emergency situations. To see what is included in one, visit the OSHA website at [www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm\\_QuickCard\\_SafetyData.html](http://www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm_QuickCard_SafetyData.html).

### Q: ***Who is impacted by the GHS-based changes?***

A: All employers and chemical manufacturers, importers, and distributors who are subject to Chemical Hazard Communication rules in Washington State will need to adapt to the new GHS-based rules.

### Q: ***When will the GHS changes affect me?***

Once the GHS-based changes are integrated and adopted into Washington State's Hazard Communication rules, the new requirements will be phased in and further information will be provided by L&I. Here's how you can stay informed:

- Sign up for L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) Listserv at [www.Lni.wa.gov/Main/Listservs/SafetyStandards.asp](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Main/Listservs/SafetyStandards.asp).
- See new rules activity at [www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Rules/WhatsNew](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Rules/WhatsNew).

### Q: ***Will I need to change my Hazard Communication Program?***

A: Yes. Once GHS-based requirements go into effect in Washington State, your required Hazard Communication Program will need to be modified to include the new labels and standardized SDS format. Your employees will also need to be trained so they can understand and use the new labels and SDSs.

**OVER** 



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**1-800-423-7233**

**Q:** *How do I know if I must follow the manufacturer requirements of the rule?*

**A:** The definition for “chemical manufacturer” will remain consistent with current rules. You are considered a manufacturer when you are an employer with a workplace where chemicals are made, processed, formulated, blended, extracted, generated, emitted, or repackaged for use or distribution. Manufacturers will need to follow changing requirements for hazard classification, labeling, and SDSs.

**Q:** *What do I do about my old MSDSs? Do I need to keep them?*

**A:** You need to keep them until you phase out of your current stock of chemicals, and then replace them with each chemical’s new SDS, as they become available.

**Q:** *How will labels change?*

The information on labels will become more standardized to increase employee comprehension of the potential hazards and precautions. New labels will feature:

- Hazard Pictograms (framed by a red border)
- A Signal Word, such as DANGER
- Hazard and Precautionary statements
- A Product Identifier and a Supplier Identifier

**A:** For more information and sample labels and pictograms, visit the OSHA website at:

- [www.OSHA.gov/dsg/hazcom/index.html](http://www.OSHA.gov/dsg/hazcom/index.html).
- For sample labels, see [www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm\\_QuickCard\\_Labels.html](http://www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm_QuickCard_Labels.html).
- For pictograms, see [www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm\\_QuickCard\\_Pictogram.html](http://www.OSHA.gov/Publications/HazComm_QuickCard_Pictogram.html).

**Q:** *Will L&I have information online for me to use, such as training and sample programs?*

**A:** L&I will provide training resources as soon as they are developed. These resources will be located at [www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ) under “H” for Hazard Communication. You may also sign up for listserv updates at [www.Lni.wa.gov/Main/Listservs/SafetyStandards.asp](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Main/Listservs/SafetyStandards.asp).

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